

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 99 OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

February 5, 2003

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, at which the following were present:

Professor J. J. Berry Smith (In the Chair)
Professor A. Johnston, Vice-Chair
Professor Carolyn Tuohy, Vice President
(Policy Development) and Associate
Provost
Professor Vivek Goel, Vice-Provost,
Faculty
Ms Honor Brabazon
Mr. Adam Chapnick
Professor Mary Chipman
Dr. Inez Elliston
Ms Ranjini Ghosh
Professor Anthony Haasz
Professor Wayne Hindmarsh
Professor Lynne C. Howarth
Mr. Josh Hunter
Professor David Jenkins
Ms Vera Melnyk

Mr. David Melville
Professor Cheryl Regehr
Professor Keren Rice
Mrs. Susan Scace
Professor Dennis Thiessen

Non-Voting Assessors:

Professor David Farrar, Vice-Provost
Students
Ms Karel Swift, University Registrar

Secretariat:

Ms Susan Girard
Ms Silvia Rosatone

Regrets:

Mr. Syed Ahmed
Professor James Donaldson
Professor Ellen Hodnett

Professor Robert Reisz
Mr. Vivek Sekhar
Professor Tas Venetsanopoulos

In Attendance:

Ms Jane Alderdice, Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison, School of Graduate Studies
Professor Rashmi Desai, Associate Dean, Division III, School of Graduate Studies

ALL TEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

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1. Time of Adjournment

On motion duly moved and seconded,

It was agreed

THAT the meeting adjourn no later than 6:00 p.m.

2. Report of the Previous Meeting

Report Number 98 of the meeting of January 15, 2003 was approved.

3. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting

There was no business arising from this Report.

4. Policy on Student Email

The Chair noted that this item had been adjourned at the last meeting and the following motion was still on the floor:

THAT the Policy on Student Email be approved, to be effective September, 2003.

Professor Farrar referred to the memorandum in which he was proposing that the motion be withdrawn in order to rethink the policy and to develop a new policy that would include other forms of communication, as well as email. He explained that the original motion was brought forward as a means of communicating with the students. Based on the discussion and comments made during the last meeting, he had decided to withdraw the original motion.

The Chair noted that a motion to withdraw was non-debatable but, with Committee approval, suggested that there be some discussion before the motion was moved in order to provide Professor Farrar with input.

A member asked if there would be wider consultation including input from students. Professor Farrar said that he would strike a committee that would be highly consultative.

In answer to a question, Professor Farrar indicated the committee would think broadly about the whole area of communication. Professor Goel added that questions of the appropriate type of communication for different purposes would be addressed.

A member applauded the administration for identifying this as a communications issue, not just about email and agreed that different types of communication were important.

A member noted that the purpose of the policy should be clearly delineated. The Chair added that it should be clear to the students what their responsibilities were.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the motion to approve the Policy on Student Email be withdrawn.

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5. School of Graduate Studies

The Chair welcomed Professor Desai and Ms Alderdice.

Professor Goel introduced the proposed items concerning the graduate academic appeals process noting that this package was intended to make amendments to existing School of Graduate Studies (SGS) procedures recently approved by the SGS Council. The intent was to improve the process from the students' perspective by introducing timelines and avenues for mediation to resolve issues at earlier stages. He noted that SGS had taken into account comments and recommendations in various documents, which included the Report of the University Ombudsperson. Professor Goel said that he had asked Mr. Moate, Senior Employment Relations Legal Counsel, and Mr. Holmes, Judicial Affairs Officer, to review the package. He noted these guidelines were in concordance with the *Guidelines for Academic Appeals within Divisions* approved by Governing Council.

a. General Regulations: Addition of Section on Appeals and Amendment of Graduate Grading Procedures.

Professor Goel referred members to the amended section on appeals in the SGS General Regulations as revised in January 2003.

A member commented that she had read articles on mediation which showed that mediation could be viewed as coercive. In her reading of the proposal, the mediation process did not seem well described. She understood that the Associate Deans would be trained in mediation but the whole topic needed a better explanation. Professor Goel replied that in the original draft, mediation had been mandatory but this had also raised similar concerns for the Provost's Office. As well, if mandatory, mediation could delay the process if parties were not interested in pursuing this avenue. Professor Goel stated the pitfalls of mediation were recognized and it was now optional. Professor Desai noted that after discussions with Professor Goel and Mr. Moate, changes were made to the appeal process to make mediation available at any stage of the process and that this amendment had been approved by SGS Council in January 2003. He noted that for mediation to be successful it must be consensual. It was in that sense that the mediation step had been made available throughout the entire process. There was also opportunity for students to consult with the Associate Deans before any action was taken at any stage. This process would be tried for several years and adjustments would be made as necessary.

A member noted the difference in wording with respect to the PhD examinations in the documentation. The table of timelines referred to the PhD examination. However, the text of the document referred to the PhD final examination. Professor Desai replied that the phrase should read "final Ph.D. oral examination" and that this change would be made to the regulations.

The Chair asked about the level of student input and consultation in these changes. Professor Desai outlined the process which had taken almost two years, noting the consultation with the GSU and the input from student and faculty members of SGS committees and Council.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

The changes to the General Regulations, as revised January 2003,
effective July 1, 2003.

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5. School of Graduate Studies (cont'd)

b. Graduate Department Academic Appeals Committee, Guidelines for Chairs

Professor Goel noted that this document, presented for information, would be helpful to Chairs and students. Also included was a form for giving notice of appeal.

There were no questions.

c. Graduate Academic Appeals Board: Revised Terms of Reference

Professor Goel commented that the proposed revision was a technical amendment to accommodate the changes to the appeal process.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

The terms of reference of the Graduate Appeals Board,
as amended, effective July 1, 2003.

6. Report on Student Financial Support, 2001-02

Professor Farrar presented the fourth annual Report on Student Financial Support. A copy of his presentation is attached hereto as Appendix "A". The highlights include:

For 2001-02:

- OSAP remained the primary means of assessment of need, with modification in certain cases such as high-need students
- OSAP unmet needs were met by the University of Toronto Advance Planning for Students (UTAPS)
- the needs for those in second-entry professional programs were met by a combination of OSAP, UTAPS grants of \$2000 and Scotia loans
- the needs of high-need students were met through grant assistance, based on individual counselling
- the total amount spent through UTAPS had increased from \$1.6 million in 1996-97 to \$10.7 million in 2001-02
- almost \$35 million had been provided in need-based financial support; this had grown from \$1.5 million in 1990-91
- graduate student funding packages had been successfully established with \$9.4 million reserved in the budget model for 2003-4
- financial counselling was available to all students within their Division and from Admissions and Awards
- data showed that accessibility to the professional programs had remained constant over three years.

A member enquired about the \$9.4 million in graduate funding and asked if this would include the University component of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program (OGS). There was concern that there were not enough endowment funds for the matching program. Professor Farrar undertook to provide more information on the source of funds for matching programs.

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6. Report on Financial Student Support, 2001-02 (cont'd)

A member asked what percentage of the graduate funding package was grant-driven funding versus University funding, in the Sciences for example. Professor Farrar replied that a breakdown for the science departments could be easily provided.

A member commented that the source of the guaranteed funding should be clear. Was it provided by the investigators or granting institutions or assured by the University? Professor Farrar commented that this was one of the reasons the implementation committee had been established. The committee would also encourage a department to determine the number of students it could support.

A member asked if there were pie charts broken down by division similar to the pie chart reflecting graduate funding by source for 2001-2. The member commented that in Medicine, teaching assistantships were not included in the support package. Stipends would not be included because they were considered employment. Professor Farrar noted that limits were placed on the number of hours a student could work. Teaching assistantships were an example of work and did form part of the funding package. Professor Goel added that the decision to count teaching assistantships as part of the funding package was one each division had to make. Professor Farrar said that providing the guaranteed funding package was the right thing to do but agreed that it was not easy to implement.

A member commented that she was interested in the amount of debt students carry other than OSAP debt and asked if this information could be part of the survey. Professor Farrar replied that he understood the concerns of the member but he noted that it was a complex question. Such data might not address the fundamental question - how much does education cost? He noted that he would be concerned about the reasons the debt was incurred – was it related to University matters or personal. The member suggested that a telephone survey could be used to obtain this information. Ms Swift stated that the debt load data were retrieved from the OSAP database and the student database, not by telephone survey. Ms Swift said that some data on other debt was available from the student survey and she would be happy to share that information.

A member noted that the number of non-European students who were enrolled in Dentistry, Law, Medicine and Pharmacy had increased and that students who applied for OSAP from these programs had also increased to 69% in 2002. The member suggested that these figures be monitored.

A member commented that there should be more flexibility in the means of payment of fees. He noted that government student loans were not provided in full in September. OSAP gave partial funding in September and the remainder in January. However, students were required to pay the tuition fee in full by October and were charged an interest fee if tuition was not paid in full. Thus the student incurred four months of interest. The member asked if students could be given assistance during this time or if students could receive full funding earlier. The member also mentioned that, though the University had the guarantee about funding, a large percentage of this funding for students in deregulated-fee programs was provided through loans and Scotiabank set a limit on credit, which varied by program. Students that exceeded the limit had to have a guarantor to co-sign a loan and some students might not be able to find one. He asked if the University could ensure these students access to funds. Ms Swift commented that she could not speak to the tuition fees policy, as this was part of Professor McCammond's portfolio. The OSAP payment structure provided 60% in September and 40% in January. However, the 1.5% service charge for unpaid fees over the 4-month

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6. Report on Financial Student Support, 2001-02 (cont'd)

period (September to January) was covered by the loans given to students. Ms Swift said she could not comment on the question concerning credit cards and acknowledged it was an ongoing issue. Ms Swift noted that students who had reached their credit limit were dealt with on an individual basis. The member replied that it was very stressful for those in need.

The Chair said he would entertain a few more questions but noted that Professor Farrar and Ms Swift could be contacted if members had further comments.

A member referred to the bar graph that showed the total funding increases and asked if comparable data of the cost of education had been collected for the same time period. Professor Farrar replied that that data could be provided. [Note: the available data would relate to tuition, not total costs of education.] He believed that the data would not map onto that curve of total funding provided. He commented that, when he began his present position, the amount of student aid the University provided was very impressive and he did not think the increases in educational costs would be comparable to increases in financial aid.

A member referred to page 6 of the Report, which concerned the accessibility studies. She asked if the amount of the graduate funding package varied by department. She asked if the funding available would affect the number of graduate students in a department. The member was pleased that there was an implementation committee and that this committee would address how departments would accommodate the new policy. Professor Goel noted that one of the effects of implementation of the new funding program was to encourage departments to review graduate enrolment planning and time to completion. He commented that the findings might show that some departments had more students than they could support with resources or supervisors.

7. Reports of the Administrative Assessors

Professor Tuohy made a presentation on two of the green papers – the Student Experience and Characteristics of the Best (Public) Research Universities. A copy of the presentation is attached hereto as Appendix “B”.

Some of the Characteristics that the Best (Public) Research Universities shared include:

- academic freedom – the freedom of inquiry to advance knowledge
- comprehensive strength in the basic disciplines
- strong, if not the best, medical, engineering, law and business schools
- an environment for interdisciplinary teaching and research
- international connections
- selectivity in the programs offered and research undertaken.

Highlighted items in the green paper on the Student Experience include:

- enhance recruitment practices
- build on financial aid programs
- recognize and reward excellence in teaching
- review the undergraduate curriculum – include learning outcomes
- find ways of creating academic cohorts in Arts and Science
- create a student community by enhancing the beyond-the-classroom experience: exploit opportunities in the GTA; develop more opportunities for international experience
- improve diversity among faculty, staff and students; build on student diversity to enrich the curriculum

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7. Reports of the Administrative Assessors (cont'd)

A member expressed his opinion that the authors had made a “political error” in the green by not giving teaching assistants a more prominent position. On a second point, he was concerned that a dramatic increase in the number of scholarships offered to entry-level students would lower the prestige of such an award if the awards were easy to attain. He suggested establishing clear definitions of the various types of awards. For example, scholarships could be renewable, merit-based awards; prizes would represent one-time awards; and bursaries could be given based on need. He added that the University could add an academic component to bursaries so that if students achieved a pre-determined academic level the bursary would be renewed as a scholarship. This would enable students who had won bursaries to enjoy the prestige associated with scholarships. He then referred to a book that advocated that every Ph.D. student take a course on university teaching. The member suggested that the University could be a leader in this area by making a course of this nature a half-course requirement in a pass/fail format. Lastly, to address the need to strengthen student participation in governance, the member stated that doctoral student membership on a committee be a requirement for completion of doctoral programs.

A member commented that the papers did not identify the unique aspects of this University. Although the University sought to emulate world-class universities, it was also important to recognize its unique strengths. The member noted the graduate programs at the University as an example. Most of the graduate programs allowed thesis and course work to proceed in parallel and he said that external reviewers had commented on this as being an attractive feature and a recruitment tool the University should promote. Lastly the member noted that a section on the unique characteristics of the University should be added to the report. The Chair agreed that perhaps this University should be a leader, not a follower.

A member commented that disability services appeared to have been overlooked. She also believed that teaching assistants should receive teacher training and that standards should be set. Although diversity and equity were emphasized, the member stressed the importance of developing policies that were culturally sensitive.

In reply to a question, Professor Goel said the deadline for submission of comments about the green papers was February 20, 2003.

A member raised the issue of being a good community citizen. Knowledge and research should be shared with the community and benefit the city. What was the University doing to build the research capacity of community groups? Professor Tuohy gave an example of community building at another university, and suggested that the University of Toronto could benefit from reviewing best practices in other institutions.

A member said that strong professional programs provided an excellent education but they should also produce graduates who would contribute to Canadian society. The University should be encouraging strong Canadian research. On another point, he commented that the student experience in professional programs was quite different than the graduate student experience and was not addressed adequately in the Green Paper.

A member asked how the various options and opportunities outlined in the green papers would be realized. Would funding be available to maintain this level of student activity? She commented that there could be better overall coordination in planning. Professor Goel noted that the green papers were discussion documents and were meant to be provocative. The fact that one item was not mentioned did not mean it was intended to be overlooked. There were many options outlined in the

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7. Reports of the Administrative Assessors (cont'd)

papers and the challenge would be selectivity – what should be the priorities? Based upon all the input received, the Provost would prepare a draft plan and it would be released for further discussion. There were many items in the papers that did not require resources but rather rethinking. For example, admissions and services could be better co-ordinated without requiring more resources.

One member commented that, in the green paper describing the characteristics of the best research universities, teaching was not prominent. Teaching was important and needed to be emphasized. Professor Farrar said that no great university existed in the absence of great undergraduate programs. Education and research went hand-in-hand. He said that teaching was an extremely important part of tenure decisions.

A member emphasized the importance of academic citizenship. She noted that it was difficult to recruit faculty to sit on committees including editorial committees. For instance, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council had difficulty recruiting for its committees. Although this took away from research time, it was a necessary aspect of being a good academic citizen. Several members endorsed this point and added that this use of academic's time needed to be well recognized.

A member noted the importance of housing for part-time students. He also suggested that the University consider requiring community service as part of the student experience. The member asked if departments or divisions would be invited to respond to the "Student Experience". Professor Goel replied that based on comments received, a white paper would be drafted and distributed for consultation, and a final planning framework would be brought to Governing Council in the spring. In the next academic year, each department and division would prepare a plan to address and achieve the items in the planning framework. He also reminded the Committee that the "name the plan contest" was still open.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The Chair noted that the date of the next scheduled meeting was March 5, 2003.

There would be a special meeting on Monday, February 27, 2003 to receive the Report of the Provost's Study on Accessibility and Career Choice in the Faculty of Law.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

February 7, 2003
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